

IRS News Release

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Last-Minute Filers Turn to E-file

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WASHINGTON — In the final days before the April 15 tax deadline, the Internal Revenue Service continued to see a strong surge in electronic filing among home computer users and tax professionals. New statistics released today show that more than 51.7 million returns have been submitted through e-file, which represents a 12 percent increase from last year.

“As the tax deadline approaches, we are seeing strong growth in the e-filing program,” said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. “E-filing is the fastest, easiest way to do taxes – even at the last minute. There are fewer errors, and taxpayers get their refunds in less than half the time of paper returns.”

E-filing continued at a record pace in several categories. Through April 9, home computer use for e-filing topped 11.8 million, up 20 percent from the same period last year. This is just 150,000 short of the number for the entire calendar year of 2003.

The Free File program reached 2.9 million returns, which breaks last year’s total of 2.8 million returns. Overall, Free File is 22 percent ahead of the same period last year. Free File, a free e-filing service offered by private companies, is available by visiting IRS.gov.

Tax professionals also filed more than 36.6 million returns electronically, an 11.8 percent increase from last year.

As the tax deadline approaches, a variety of help is available at IRS.gov, including information about extensions and last-minute tips. The IRS continues to see large amounts of activity at the Web site, including:

- The “Where’s My Refund?” feature on IRS.gov generated more than 17.4 million uses through last week. The “Where’s My Refund?” service is accessible from the IRS.gov home page. Instructions guide individual taxpayers through a process that asks for three pieces of information from their returns: Social Security Number, filing status and refund amount.

- Another 10.1 million taxpayers have used IRS.gov to double-check the amount of the advance Child Tax Credit they received last year. Taxpayers who claim the Child Tax Credit this year must remember to reduce it by the amount of the advance Child Tax Credit payment received in 2003. This has been the most common error made by taxpayers this year.

2004 FILING SEASON STATISTICS

Cumulative through the weeks ending 4/11/03 and 4/9/04

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Individual Income Tax Returns			
Total Receipts	90,184,000	89,427,000	- 0.8
Total Processed	80,541,000	82,571,000	2.5
E-filing Receipts:			
TOTAL	46,223,000	51,770,000	12.0
TeleFile (phone)	3,590,000	3,316,000	- 7.6
Computer	42,633,000	48,454,000	13.7
Tax Professionals	32,754,000	36,634,000	11.8
Self-prepared	9,879,000	11,820,000	19.6
Current Tax Year Refunds Certified:			
Number	71,434,000	73,171,000	2.4
Amount of principal	\$ 141.979 billion	\$ 152.957 billion	7.7
Average refund	\$1,988	\$2,090	5.2
Direct Deposit Refunds:			
Number	38,083,000	41,807,000	9.8
Amount	\$ 90.282 billion	\$ 102.680 billion	13.7
Average	\$2,371	\$2,456	3.6